(b) if so, whether Government had decided in the inter-ministerial meeting held in September, 2001 that it was essential to first check whether similar quality control order could be issued under some other law;

(c) if so, whether this issue has been examined by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry;

(d) if so, the details of its report thereon; and

(e) the reasons for removing the cement from the purview of ECA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Cement has been removed from the purview of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 by an Order dated 15.02.2002.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The question of issuing a fresh Cement Quality Control Order either under the provisions of the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951 or the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986 was examined in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry which felt that it would be more appropriate to issue the fresh Cement Quality Control Order under the provisions of Section 14 of the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986. The Ministry of Law is being consulted for issue of the Order.

(e) Cement has been removed from the purview of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 as the production capacity of the cement industry has far exceeded the demand for the commodity and there is no scarcity.

BPL Families in Andhra Pradesh

927. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is difference between Central Government and the State Government of Andhra Pradesh regarding number of BPL familes in the State for providing subsidised foodgrain;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the remedical measures being taken to resolve the difference so that BPL families of the State do not suffer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The number of BPL families as per the Government of India estimates in Andhra Pradesh in 40.63 lakhs against which the State Government has identified 113 lakh families. The State-wise number of BPL families have been worked out as per the poverty estimates of the Planning Commission for the year 1993-94 adopting the methodology of the Expert Group applied to the population projections of the Registrar General as on 1.3.2000. This basis is being uniformly applied for allocation of foodgrains to all BPL families in the country without exception and cannot be changed for any one State in isolation.

Abolition of Essential Commodities Act

†928. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to abolish the Essential Commodities Act; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps being taken by Government for consumer protection?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) There is at present no such proposal under consideration of the Government.

(b) Does not arise.

Recovery for storage and transit loss of Foodgrains

929. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether FCI authorities have started recovery as well as other penal action on employees as well as official of north eastern region responsible for handing storage and transit loss in excess of the permissible limits;

(b) if so, the criteria on which accountability is fixed and the number of staff brought under the purview of such penal action; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.